

# Welcome to

TRAUMA-INFORMED LEADERSHIP:  
THE BALANCE OF COMPASSION &  
ACCOUNTABILITY

**THE TRAINING WILL BEGIN SHORTLY**

*While you're waiting...*



*Icebreaker Question* (answer in the chat)

What one sentence do you think your team would most like to hear from you?



*Survey & Certificate of Completion*

Available following the training.

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WITH US!**



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# Hi, We're CalTrin!

## Who we are

- The California Training Institute
- Funded by the State of California, Dept. of Social Services, Office of Child Abuse Prevention (OCAP) to support child abuse prevention through professional development and extended learning opportunities.
- Designed for staff of family strengthening and child abuse prevention organizations in California, including Family Resource Centers, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, community-based organizations, and other child and family serving systems.

## What we offer

- Live webinars & small group training
- Virtual, self-paced courses
- Job aids & other resources



# UPCOMING TRAININGS

mark your calendars!

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08/22 | *Leadership Coffee Chat*  
Leading with Heart: the Power of Empathy



08/22 | Intervening with Youth with IDD who have Experienced Trauma



09/19 | Families Affected by Substance Abuse Disorders: A Protective Factors Approach



09/20 | Working with Asian American Families: A Strength-Based Approach



09/26 | Mental Health Matters in Early Childhood  
*CAMFT CEs available · Interpretación en español*



09/27 | Direction, Alignment, Commitment Workshop

# Before We Begin...

## DURING



Access the presentation slides now! The link can be found in the chat.



This presentation is being recorded.

## DURING



Review interactive features for today's session. Locate the controls on the toolbar at the bottom of your screen.

- Chat
- Q&A

## AFTER



Complete the survey at the end of this webinar to receive your Certificate of Attendance.



A follow-up email will be sent to all participants within two days.



# Trauma-Informed Leadership: The Balance of Compassion & Accountability

**Presenter: Lisa Conradi, PsyD**

RGHS is not responsible for the creation of content and any views expressed in its materials and programming.



# Speaker SPOTLIGHT



**LISA CONRADI, PsyD**  
**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
**CHADWICK CENTER FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES**  
Rady Children's Hospital-San Diego

- Significant experience supporting service systems to become more trauma-informed, including leading implementation of trauma-focused evidence-based practices
- Licensed clinical psychologist trained on evidence-based trauma-focused treatment practices, including Trauma-Focused Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (TF-CBT) and Child-Parent Psychotherapy (CPP)
- Co-author of Trauma-Informed Assessment with Children and Adolescents: Strategies to Support Clinicians

# Trauma-Informed Leadership: The Balance of Compassion and Accountability

Version 2.0

Lisa Conradi, Psy.D.

Executive Director

Chadwick Center for Children and Families

Poll Question  
#1: How Many  
Staff do you  
Supervise/Roll  
up to you?

1-5

6-10

11-20

More than 20



Poll  
Question  
#2: How  
Long Have  
you Been a  
Leader?

0-2 years

3-5 years

6-10 years

More than 10 years

# What are we going to talk about today?

01

Articulate why a trauma-informed approach to leadership is important across organizations

02

Outline the Four Pillars of Trauma-Informed Leadership™

03

Highlight the challenges and pitfalls that leaders will likely come across when they implement this approach

04


Provide concrete skills and strategies on effectively implementing the Four Pillars of Trauma-Informed Leadership™

# Leader Snapshot: Maria

Maria is a Director at a mid-size Family Resource Center located in Central California

She has been at the FRC for 10 years. She became a Director two years ago.

She has a team of 7 direct reports and 20 people who roll up to her

A row of five yellow wooden figures, resembling stylized people or characters, standing on a wooden surface. The figures are arranged in a slightly curved line, with the one in the center being the most prominent. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

What types of challenges might Maria be experiencing in her role?

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*Type your thoughts in the Chat*

# Setting the Stage: Applying a Trauma Lens



# What Characterizes Trauma?

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- Harmful event or series of events
- Lack of actual or perceived control in the harmful situation
- Violation of trust and safety
- Disruption in the social contract





# Collective Trauma

- Refers to the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society
- The tragedy is represented in the collective memory of the group, which includes both a reproduction of the event, but also an ongoing reconstruction of the trauma in an attempt to make sense of it.

# Syndemic Trauma

- A syndemic refers to two or more health problems that coexist at the same time or concurrently
- A syndemic trauma refers to two major traumatic events that occur at the same time
- Scholars have argued that we are currently experiencing a syndemic trauma – the co-occurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic and grappling with racial justice issues (Powell, 2020)





# Trauma and the Current Workforce

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Our collective experiences of COVID-19 has created a collective trauma

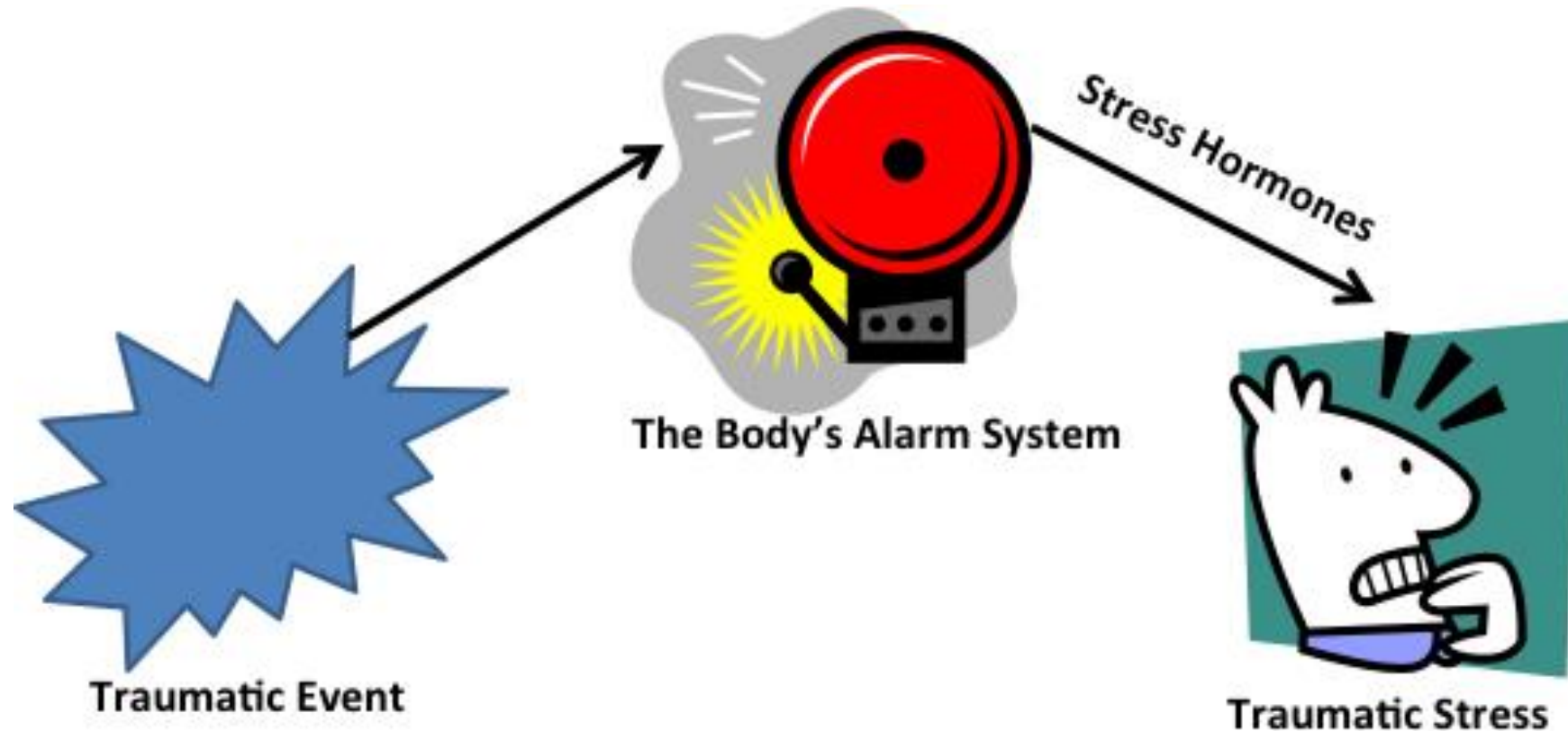
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COVID, along with many of the racial justice issues impacting our staff, has created a culture of syndemic trauma

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In addition, staff often bring their own current or past experiences of trauma into the workplace

# Traumatic Stress Response Cycle



Source: Georgetown University Center for Child & Human Development. (n.d.). *Stress and the developing brain: The stress response*. Retrieved from Center for Early Childhood Mental Health Consultation website: [http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma/mod2\\_1.html](http://www.ecmhc.org/tutorials/trauma/mod2_1.html)

# Why is this Important?

- When individuals are in a “reactive” mode, they are activating the “fight, flight, or freeze” parts of their brain, or the emotional centers:
  - Those in “flight” might be calling out more often, increased absences, leave for another job
  - Those in “fight” mode might be disagreeing with every decision, pushing back on everything
  - Those in “freeze” mode might be “checked out” and not engaged, just trying to survive
- When they can step back and reflect, it activates the “cognitive” part of their brain, or the frontal lobe, creating opportunities for more innovation and problem-solving





# What is Trauma-Informed Care?

Trauma-informed care seeks to:

- **Realize** the widespread impact of trauma and understand paths for recovery;
- **Recognize** the signs and symptoms of trauma in patients, families, and staff;
- **Integrate knowledge** about trauma into policies, procedures, and practices; and
- Actively **avoid re-traumatization.**

# SAMHSA'S KEY PRINCIPLES OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED APPROACH

Safety

Trustworthiness  
and  
Transparency

Peer Support

Collaboration  
and Mutuality

Empowerment,  
Voice, and  
Choice

Cultural,  
Historical, and  
Gender Issues

# What Does it Mean to be a Trauma-Informed Leader?

A trauma-informed leader is an individual who integrates the key principles of trauma-informed care into their leadership style

Involves effectively balancing compassion and accountability



# A Trauma-Informed Leader...



- Creates physically and psychologically safe teams and environments
- Builds trust between and among team members
- Facilitates multiple opportunities for connection
- Identifies clear boundaries and expectations while also supporting staff autonomy, voice, and choice
- Engages in the “tough” conversations when needed
- Has a space to be vulnerable and take care of themselves

# The Four Pillars of Trauma-Informed Leadership™

Safety

Trust

Autonomy

Connection  
and  
Relationships





# Safety



# Safety

Physical – Freedom from threats of violence, whether from self or others. Physical safety includes being aware of risks in the environment and taking steps to ensure basic physical safety when there is a threat.

Psychological – The ability to be safe within one's own identity and the sense of feeling safe with other people and in one's community. Your ability to create psychological safety in an interaction may increase the comfort that the person feels during the process

# The Role of Safety in Trauma and Trauma-Informed Leadership

- A traumatic experience is characterized by a profound lack of both physical and emotional safety
- An individual who has experienced chronic and complex trauma, may have difficulty distinguishing between safe and unsafe situations
- Following a traumatic event, a person may feel unsafe even when they are physically safe
- This can lead to them re-experiencing the event with the physiological responses
- A trauma-informed leader actively works on creating a physically and psychologically safe work environment



# Team Psychological Safety

*A shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk taking.*

# What Psychological Safety is NOT

Psychological safety is not about being nice (or making people happy)

Psychological safety is not a personality factor

Psychological safety is not just another word for trust

Psychological safety is not just about lowering performance standards

# The Benefits of Psychological Safety



- **Encourages speaking up:** Psychological safety alleviates concern about others' reaction to behaviors or actions that have the potential for embarrassment.
- **Enables clarity of thought:** When the brain is activated by fear, it has less neural processing power for exploration, design, or analysis.
- **Supports productive conflicts:** Psychological safety allows self-expression, productive discussion, and the thoughtful handling of conflict.
- **Mitigates failures:** A climate of psychological makes it easier, and therefore more common, to report and discuss errors.

# The Benefits of Psychological Safety, Continued



- **Promotes innovations:** Removing the fear of speaking up allows people to suggest the novel ideas and possibilities that are integral to developing innovative products and services.
- **Removes obstacles to pursuing goals for achievement performances.** With psychological safety, individuals can focus on achieving motivating goals rather than on self-protection.
- **Increases accountability:** Rather than supporting a permissive atmosphere, psychological safety creates a climate that supports people in taking the interpersonal risks necessary to pursue high standards and achieve challenging goals.

# Psychological Safety and Team Engagement

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	<b>Low Standards</b>	<b>High Standards</b>
<b>High Psychological Safety</b>	Comfort Zone	Learning and High-Performance zone
<b>Low Psychological Safety</b>	Apathy zone	Anxiety zone

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# Trauma-Informed Leadership Self- Assessment

Psychological Safety

Poll Question: Team members feel comfortable communicating with each other and/or their leader when concerns arise

Never

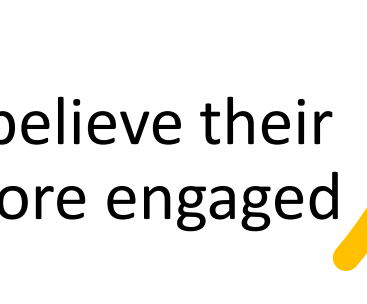
Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

# How Leaders Can Cultivate Psychological Safety in their Teams

- **Be accessible and approachable:** Leaders encourage team members to learn together by being accessible and personally involved.
  - **Acknowledge the limits of current knowledge:** When leaders admit that they don't know something, their genuine display of humility encourages other team members to follow suit.
  - **Be willing to display fallibility:** To create psychological safety, team leaders must demonstrate a tolerance of failure by acknowledging their own fallibility.
  - **Invite participation:** When people believe their leaders value their input, they're more engaged and responsive.
- 

# How Leaders Can Cultivate Psychological Safety in their Teams

- **Highlight failures as learning opportunities:** Instead of punishing people for well-intentioned risks that backfire, leaders encourage team members to embrace error and deal with failure in a productive manner.
- **Use direct language:** Using direct, actionable language instigates the type of straightforward, blunt discussion that enables learning.
- **Set boundaries:** When leaders are as clear as possible about what is acceptable, people feel more psychologically safe than when boundaries are vague or unpredictable.
- **Hold people accountable for transgressions:** When people cross boundaries set in advance and fail to perform up to set standards, leaders must hold them accountable in a fair and consistent way.

The background features a gradient from light purple to dark grey. On the left, several 3D cubes of varying sizes are arranged in a loose, upward-sloping pattern, connected by thin, curved white lines. On the right, a network diagram is visible, consisting of white dots connected by thin white lines, forming a complex web of interconnected nodes. The overall aesthetic is modern and digital.

Trust



# The Role of Trust in Trauma and Trauma-Informed Leadership

- Trauma can profoundly impact an individual's ability to trust in the world to be safe
- Some types of interpersonal trauma occur when the individual a child is supposed to trust the most (e.g., a parent) is the person who hurts them
- This can severely impair an individual's ability to trust in others over time
- A trauma-informed leader actively creates an environment of trust and transparency

# Trust Defined

*Choosing to risk  
making something you  
value vulnerable to  
another person's  
actions.*





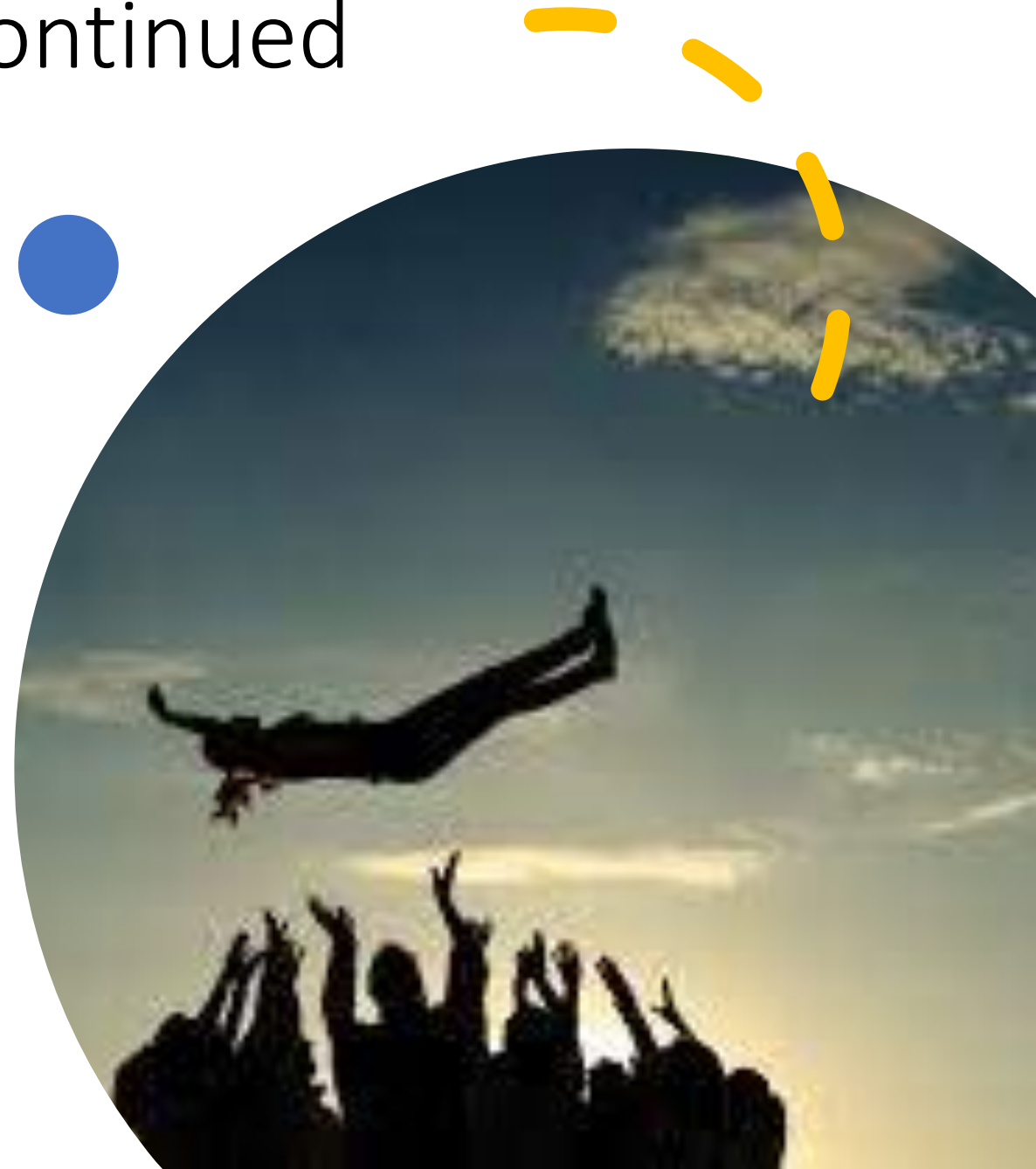
# BRAVING

- **Boundaries:** You respect my boundaries, and when you're not clear about what's okay and not okay, you ask. You're willing to say no.
- **Reliability:** You do what you say you'll do. At work, this means staying aware of your competencies and limitations, so you don't overpromise and are able to deliver on commitments and balance competing priorities.
- **Accountability:** You own your mistakes, apologize, and make amends.
- **Vault:** You don't share information or experiences that are not yours to share. I need to know that my confidences are kept, and that you're not sharing with me any information about other people that should be confidential.



# BRAVING, Continued

- **Integrity:** You choose courage over comfort. You choose what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy. And you choose to practice your values rather than simply professing them.
- **Nonjudgment:** I can ask for what I need, and you can ask for what you need. We can talk about how we feel without judgement. We can ask each other for help without judgment.
- **Generosity:** You extend the most generous interpretation possible to the intentions, words, and actions of others.



# Trauma-Informed Leadership Self- Assessment

Trust



Poll Question:  
Team members  
feel comfortable  
both setting and  
respecting each  
other's  
boundaries

Never

Rarely

Sometimes

Often

Always

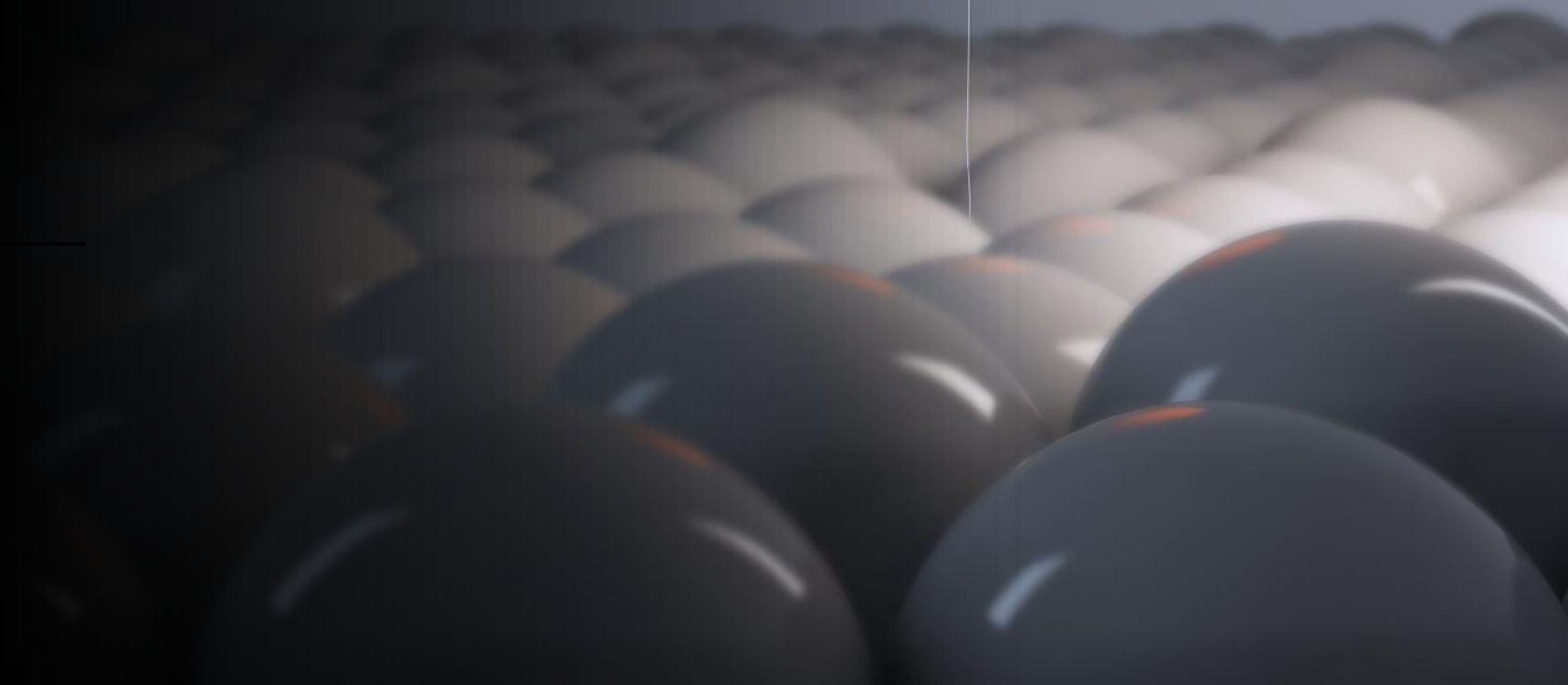
# Increasing Trust

- Consistency – checking in, following up
- Have the hard conversations
- Question (and encourage staff to question) the “stories we tell ourselves”
- Doing what you say you will do (being dependable and consistent)
- Being approachable and friendly (people trust leaders they like)
- Championing authenticity, empathy and humanity.
- Showing support for your team members, even when they make mistakes (and admitting to your own)





Autonomy



# The Role of Autonomy in Trauma and Trauma-Informed Leadership

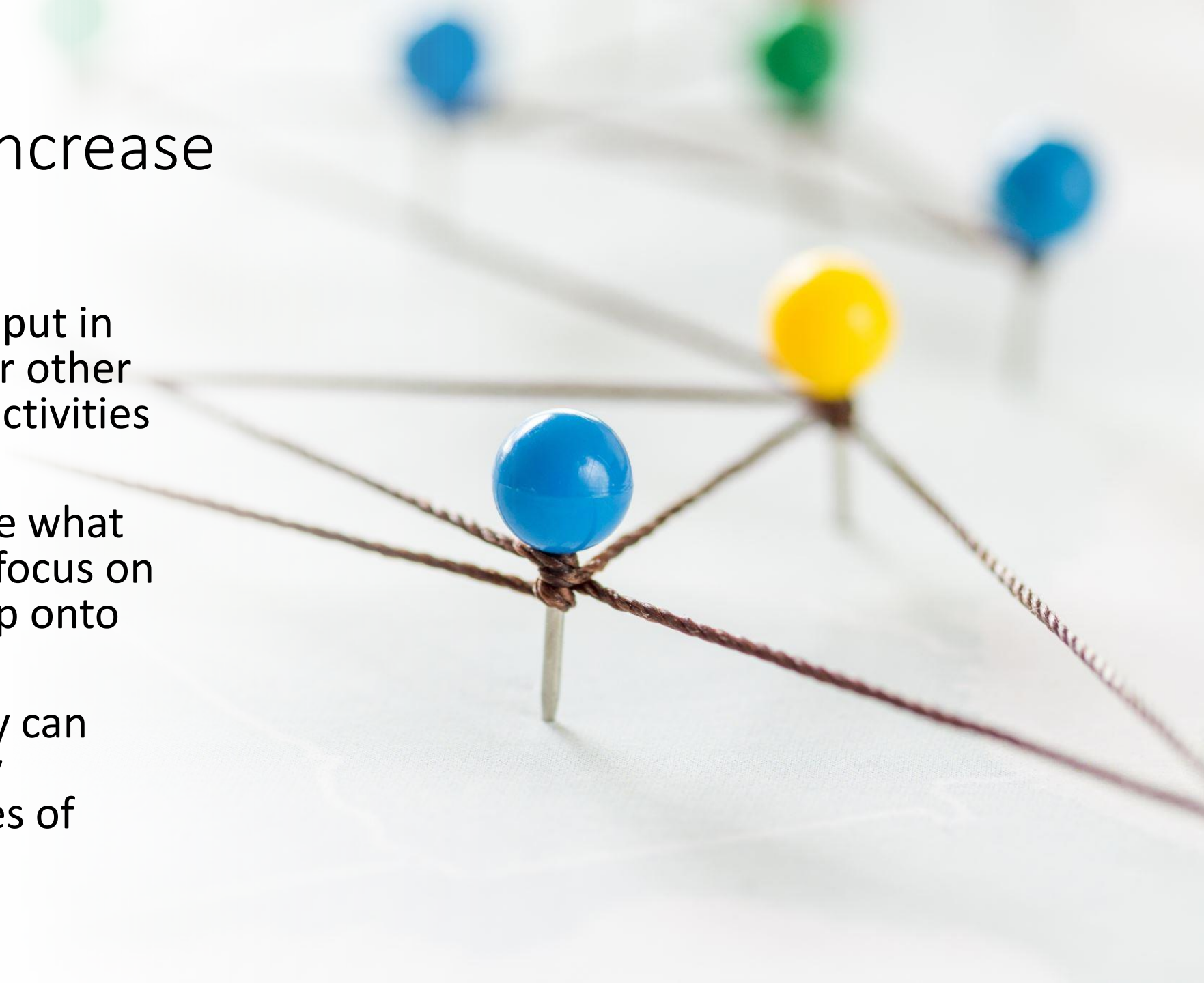
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- Autonomy refers to an individual's ability and right to make decisions and have voice, choice, and control over their own lives
- A hallmark of a traumatic event is that an individual or group's autonomy has been taken by them through physical or emotional coercion
- An individual who has experienced trauma often spends much of their energy trying to regain control
- A trauma-informed leader actively works on identifying ways in which staff can meet business requirements while also retaining a sense of autonomy and control



# Strategies to Increase Autonomy

- Opportunities for input in strategic planning or other key organizational activities and initiatives
- Help staff determine what they really need to focus on - how does that map onto their role?
- Clarity on what they can and can't control by incorporating "Zones of Control" language



# Setting the Stage: Zones of Control, Influence, and Acceptance



## ZONE OF ACCEPTANCE

*Areas that we cannot change. We might be able to write letters or state our preferences in open forums, but our influence is indirect at best.*



## ZONE OF INFLUENCE

*Areas where we can provide direct input, but we do not make the final decision. These are likely areas in which we advocate for staff at our Senior Leadership/Board level or with the various funding sources through ongoing meetings, etc.*



## ZONE OF CONTROL

*Areas that we have complete power over and should be the areas in which we spend most of our time and energy*





# Connection and Relationships

# The Role of Connections and Relationships in Trauma and Trauma-Informed Leadership

- Some of the most complicated and challenging types of trauma occur within the context of our connections and relationships
- This type of trauma is called complex trauma
- Complex trauma can have a profound impact on how we see the world and relate to others around us
- The best way to heal complex trauma is within the context of relationships
- A trauma-informed leader actively works on creating opportunities for connections and relationships within their team and organization





# Facilitate Opportunities for Social Support

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- Social support refers to activities that allow team members to remain committed to the team, especially at times of emotional turmoil (e.g., when conflict arises). Social support can take a number of forms that can include:
  - Being an ally to them when they need someone to help advocate for them or their ideas
  - Reassuring their worth and value to the team-tell them how much you and the other team members appreciate them
  - Listening to their problems and offering guidance – if they ask for it.



# Additional Strategies to Build Connections and Relationships



CULTIVATE  
MEANINGFUL  
MEETINGS AND  
GATHERINGS  
FOR STAFF



HAVE TEAM  
MEMBERS  
WORK  
TOGETHER ON  
PROJECTS



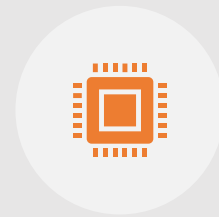
BUILD  
INCLUSIVE  
CULTURES



IDENTIFY STAFF  
MEMBERS  
"LANGUAGE OF  
APPRECIATION  
IN THE  
WORKPLACE"



INCORPORATE  
GRATITUDE TO  
EACH OTHER IN  
THE CULTURE  
OF THE  
ORGANIZATION



BE FLEXIBLE  
WHEN YOU  
CAN

Bringing it All Together

# General Tips on Leading with Compassion and Accountability

- Don't be afraid to create clear boundaries and expectations for job roles and performance
- Engage in courageous and difficult conversations on an ongoing basis
- Create an environment that views mistakes as opportunities to learn (*but still hold people accountable to appropriate consequences*)
- Create opportunities for staff to connect with one another and appreciate each other as human beings
- Provide ongoing and transparent communication regarding initiatives and expectations
- Focus efforts for improvement in your zones of control and influence
- Be aware of your own triggers and trauma and how it may be impacting your ability to fully engage





# Trauma-Informed Leadership at the Organizational Level

- Understanding the current culture
  - Policies and procedures
  - Organizational Mission and Vision
  - Organizational Values and Principles
- Using Implementation Science Principles institute a change in the culture
  - Pilot testing
  - Small tests of change
- Active integration (i.e., practice!)
- Taking care of yourself



Questions?

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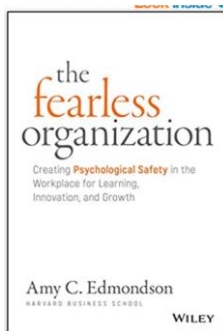
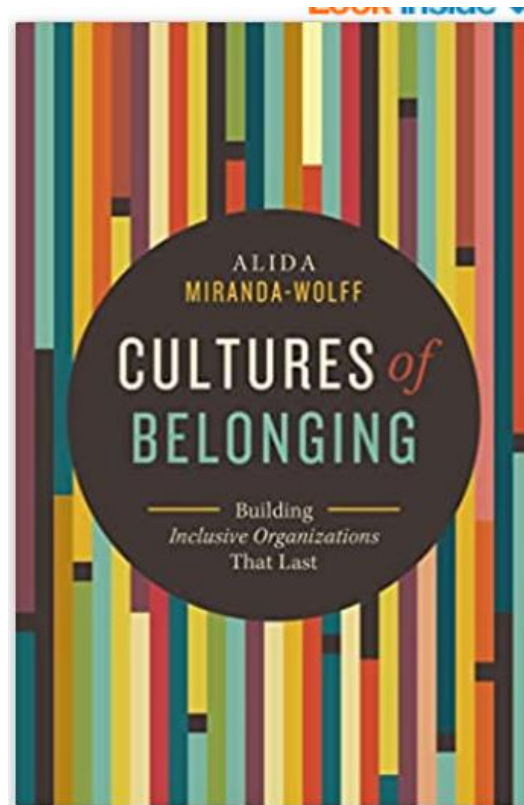
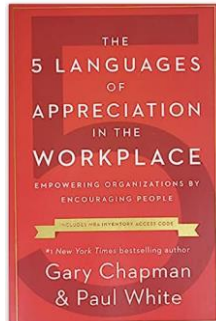
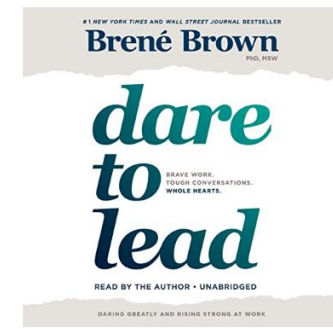
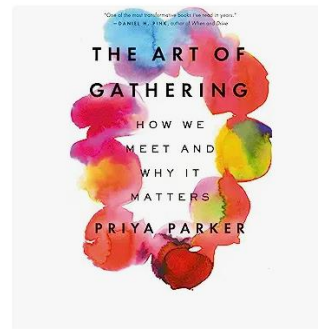
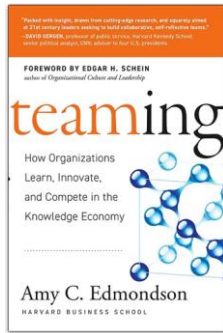
# Next Steps

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Review the handout, “How to Foster Psychological Safety on Your Teams”

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Review the “BRAVING” worksheet and reflect on your strengths and areas to grow



# Resources

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# Contact Information

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# Thanks for joining us!

## WHAT'S NEXT?

- Survey and certificate in the chat now
- Follow-up email with resources within two days
- Mark your calendar! Save Feb 7 & Mar 6, 2024, for a workshop with Dr. Conradi:  
*Trauma-Informed Leadership: A Deep Dive into Safety and Trustworthiness*
- Watch your inbox for the next issue of *CalTrin Connect*



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